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REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-18 are pending. Claim 5 has been canceled, and claims 1-18 are new.

The applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment and reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The applicants would like to thank the examiner for the interview held on January 29, 2003 in the USPTO. In the interview, the undersigned and examiner Le reached an understanding about what the applicants were trying to claim in the final part of claim 1 and in the final part of claim 10. Prior to the interview, the examiner thought the applicants were trying to claim the axial extension of the ribs, which is shown in Figure 4. The examiner now understands that the applicants wish to claim the radial extension of at least two of the ribs beyond the base wall of the wheel housing, as shown in Fig. 1. The examiner pointed out that the word "radial" should appear in the claims to clarify this point, and that such a change would require further consideration on his part.

In response, claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the limitations that the worm housing segment is located radially outward of the wheel housing segment and that at least two of the ribs extend radially outward from the wheel housing segment. Independent claims 1 and 10 are now believed to be allowable over the patents to Walther and Hauser, either alone or in combination.

In the office action dated 8 October 2002, claims 1, 2, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over the patent to Walther in view of the patent to Hauser. Neither the patent to Walther nor the patent to Hauser, however, shows at least two ribs extending radially from a wheel housing to a worm housing. Since this feature is neither disclosed nor rendered obvious by the prior art of record, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 9 are dependent on claim 1 and are believed to be patentable for the same reasons that claim 1 is patentable.

Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over the patent to Walther in view of the patent to Hauser as applied to claim 1 and further in view of the patent to Evans. The patent to Evans fails to supply what is missing in the patents to Walther and Hauser. That is, the Evans patent fails to show at least two ribs extending radially from a wheel housing to a worm housing.

Claims 6-8 and 11 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over the patent to Walther in view of the patent to Hauser as applied to claims 1 and 10 and further in view of the patent to Porter. The patent to Porter fails to supply what is missing in the patents to Walther and Hauser. That is, the Porter patent fails to show at least two ribs extending radially from a wheel housing to a worm housing.

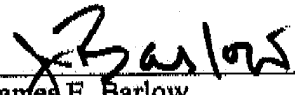
New claims 12-18 are believed to be allowable for the reasons given with respect to claims 1 and 10. That is, claims 12-17 are dependent on claim 1 or claim 10, which are believed to be patentable for the reasons given above. New independent claim 18 contains the limitation that at least two of the ribs continuously extend radially to the worm housing segment, beyond

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the base wall of the wheel housing segment. Therefore, claim 18 is believed to be allowable for the reasons given with respect to claims 1 and 10.

In view of the forgoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Entry of this amendment and a timely notice of allowance is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,


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MARKED UP VERSION OF CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A geared motor comprising:

a yoke having an opening and receiving a motor unit;

a gear housing made of a resin material, said gear housing covering said opening of said yoke and receiving a worm gear assembly for transmitting a rotational force of said motor unit to an output shaft connected to said worm gear assembly, said worm gear assembly including a worm wheel, said gear housing having a wheel housing segment that receives and rotatably supports said worm wheel, said wheel housing segment having a base wall, said output shaft being connected to said worm wheel and being rotatably received in said base wall of said wheel housing segment such that an axial direction of said output shaft is generally perpendicular to a plane of said base wall of said wheel housing segment; and

a plurality of ribs extending over at least part of an outer surface of said base wall of said wheel housing segment, each one of said plurality of ribs having a lateral thickness that is measured in a direction perpendicular to said axial direction of said output shaft and that is equal to or smaller than an axial thickness of said base wall of said wheel housing segment measured in said axial direction of said output shaft, wherein:

said worm gear assembly further includes a worm;

said gear housing has a worm housing segment that rotatably receives said worm, and the worm housing segment is located radially outward of the wheel housing segment; and

at least two of said plurality of ribs continuously extend radially to said worm housing segment beyond said base wall of said wheel housing segment.

2. (Amended) A geared motor according to claim 1, wherein:

said wheel housing segment further includes a peripheral wall that generally extends from an outer peripheral edge of said base wall of said wheel housing segment in said axial direction of said output shaft; and

at least [said each] one of said plurality of ribs further extends in said axial direction of said output shaft over at least part of an outer peripheral surface of said peripheral wall of said wheel housing segment.

9. (Amended) A geared motor [housing] according to claim 1, wherein said at least two of said plurality of ribs extend substantially to an imaginary plane, the imaginary plane extending through a rotational axis of said worm and being parallel with a rotational axis of said worm wheel.

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10. (Once Amended) A geared motor housing comprising:

a yoke for housing a motor unit and including an opening;

a resin gear housing covering said opening of said yoke and for housing a worm gear assembly, said resin gear housing having a wheel housing segment for rotatably supporting a worm wheel, said wheel housing segment having a base wall for rotatably receiving an output shaft connected to said worm wheel such that an axial direction of said output shaft is generally perpendicular to a plane of said base wall, said resin gear housing further including a worm housing segment for rotatably receiving a worm gear assembly worm, wherein the worm housing segment is located radially outward of the wheel housing segment; and

a plurality of ribs each extending over at least part of an outer surface of said base wall, at least two of said plurality of ribs continuously extending radially to said worm housing segment beyond said base wall.

Appendix
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